

Maine Conservation Corps

Handbook



AmeriCorps “Getting Things Done”

Maine Conservation Corps

AmeriCorps Handbook

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MAINE CONSERVATION CORPS

HANDBOOK

This handbook has been designed to provide information about the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) AmeriCorps Program. It is a reference tool and we hope that it will be helpful in providing you with some of the answers to questions you may have.

Welcome to the MCC!

The Maine Conservation Corps

The MCC was established by the governor and legislature in 1983. The MCC operates programs that accomplish natural resource projects.

MCC AmeriCorps members serve in two programs:

Environmental Educators: Members are partnered with local non-profit organizations and natural resource agencies such as Maine Department of Environmental Protection, University of Maine Cooperative Extension Water Quality Office and Maine Public Utilities Commission where they focus on recruiting, managing and training volunteers for water quality stewardship, developing environmental education curriculum, conducting outreach presentations teacher training workshops.

Field Team Program: Members are partnered with local non-profit organizations, municipalities and state and federal agencies such as Portland Trails and Acadia National Park. Team members perform trail construction and maintenance projects throughout the state of Maine.

History of National Service

In times of great need, Americans have always answered the call of service. Ever since our nation was founded by citizens who risked everything to establish freedom, America has been able to offer freedom to more Americans, and to eliminate discrimination and other great injustices. From the American Revolution to the Civil Rights Movement and from the smallest farms to the biggest cities, Americans have worked together to improve their communities and their lives.

America's tradition of service has always had strong roots in its communities. The country's vast network of civic and religious organizations, schools, and businesses has been key in bringing people together to meet common goals. Since the 19th century, foreign observers have noted that through these groups Americans have shown a consistent commitment of service by building new homes, protecting public spaces, and helping those in need.

1933: Franklin D. Roosevelt creates the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The origins of the MCC stem from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program developed during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The CCC was developed as part of the Emergency Work Act and passed at Senate Bill on March 31, 1933. The purpose of the CCC was to recruit thousands of young men in a peacetime army to work in forests and parks, the lands and waters that constitute our basic natural resources.

The CCC had an immediate economic and social impact on the nation. By 1935 the CCC had created jobs for over 600,000 young men across the nation and over 3 million men would participate in the program before it disbanded in 1942. The need for supplies ranging from food to equipment provided even more jobs. Corps members were required to send \$25.00 of their \$30.00 monthly wage to their families, thus expanding markets at home.

By taking young men off the streets and giving them jobs, the CCC created a positive impact on society. These young men were given a healthy work environment, learned how to live and work together as a team, and many learned how to read and write. CCC members built fire towers, truck roads, and firebreaks; planted millions of trees; reclaimed thousands of acres from erosion; built countless federal and state parks and campgrounds; salvaged timber from the New England hurricane blow-downs of 1938; and improved fish and wildlife habitats.

The MCC has continued the traditions and service ethic of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The MCC works in partnership with natural resource organizations throughout the state of Maine to accomplish projects of long-term benefit for public and private non-profit organizations. These natural resource projects provide jobs, job training, and conservation education. The MCC is dedicated to building self-esteem, teamwork, leadership, and encouraging the aspirations of its members.

1961: The Peace Corps is established.

Volunteers in Service to America, or VISTA, began in the 1960s. VISTA is now part of AmeriCorps and engages adults in helping low-income communities help themselves.

1983: The Maine Conservation Corps is established.

The MCC was established in 1983 and operates both year round and seasonally on projects throughout Maine. The MCC has a history of working in partnership with local, state, federal

and private non-profit organizations, as well as job training offices throughout the state of Maine. In 2008, November 14th was proclaimed MCC Day by the governor in celebration of the MCC 25th anniversary and the Civilian Conservation Corps 75th anniversary.

The MCC assists natural resource agencies throughout the state of Maine to accomplish projects of long-term benefit for public and private non-profit organizations. These natural resource projects provide service employment to many people from Maine and other states. The MCC is dedicated to building self-esteem, teamwork, leadership, and encouraging the aspirations of members through service employment.

1993: AmeriCorps is launched.

In his Inaugural Address, Bill Clinton challenged Americans to “seasons of service” around the country. In May 1993, President Clinton introduced historic legislation to expand opportunities for young Americans to serve our country, build up their communities, and earn awards for their own education in return. Months later, Democrats and Republicans in Congress joined together to pass the bill creating AmeriCorps and the agency that administers it, the Corporation for National Service. President Bill Clinton signed the legislation, the National and Community Service Trust Act, on September 21, 1993.

AmeriCorps Mission and Objectives

For most of the past decade the MCC has been an AmeriCorps program and we are proud to support the AmeriCorps movement that unites diverse Americans to improve our communities, as demonstrated in the AmeriCorps Ethic of Service outlined below:

Getting Things Done: Above all, AmeriCorps is about getting things done. There is much that needs to be done to make our schools better, our streets safer, our families healthier, and our environment cleaner. AmeriCorps members are committed to meeting the needs of America.

Strengthening Communities: In addition to meeting unmet needs, AmeriCorps will strengthen America’s communities by connecting the civic groups, schools and religious organizations that make America’s neighborhoods vibrant, and by bringing Americans together from all different backgrounds in the common work of service. Through AmeriCorps, diverse AmeriCorps members can preserve their special qualities, recognize their common ones, and bring their communities together.

Encouraging Responsibility: Responsibility includes duties to self, family, community, and country. The idea is simple: actively contributing to your community, being dependable for those who depend on you; and living up to your fullest potential.

Expanding Opportunities: The AmeriCorps experience can expand your options in many ways, providing priceless life and job skills. AmeriCorps reflects the idea of reciprocity: when you give something great to your country, you get something back in return. AmeriCorps creates opportunity for those who take responsibility.

For MCC AmeriCorps members, this translates into the following:

- Serve on community conservation and environmental service projects
- Promote, build and serve with community partners

- Develop citizenship and personal responsibility
- Study natural and environmental sciences, and ecological and conservation issues
- Assist teaching environmental and conservation education in public school
- Construct and maintain trails on state, federal and public lands

An additional priority of the Corporation for National and Community Service is to provide resources in times of natural or man-made disasters and emergencies. The Maine Commission for Community Service may call up and deploy AmeriCorps members to respond to disasters in a local or national emergency disaster relief effort. The deployment may continue for up to 10% of the member's service time (up to a maximum of 120 hours) over the course of year of service. During the period of deployment the program will continue to pay the living allowance and insurance for AmeriCorps members. All AmeriCorps program policies, terms and condition shall continue while on special disaster relief assignment. All benefits and protections afforded and provided to AmeriCorps members shall continue while AmeriCorps members remain on special disaster relief assignment. AmeriCorps members may continue to accrue service hours during any deployment if their assignment takes them away from their regular service assignment during normal service hours. Although the Program is required to allow the deployment, individual members and sites may request an automatic exemption due to service assignment disruption or member's personal situation.

The Maine Conservation Corps Mission & Objectives

The mission and objective of the MCC program is to offer members an opportunity to experience a different way of living, learning and serving. Serving with the MCC also enhances their personal development and ability to serve their community by accomplishing significant conservation and environmental service projects which will protect and restore natural resources and public lands.

Accomplish Conservation Projects: This is the primary principle of all MCC programs, but is most closely associated with the teams of young people serving on projects around the state. They build and rehabilitate campsites and trails (more non-motorized trails than any other organization in Maine), build outdoor learning centers for schools, construct cabins, picnic shelters, bridges and erosion control structures, maintain boundaries, and improve wildlife habitat and timber stands.

Create Conservation Employment: The MCC develops strong work and community service ethics, teamwork, communication, self-esteem and confidence, safety and other basic job and outdoor skills. Members receive a living allowance, health insurance, and opportunities for networking and gaining experience in environmental careers.

Provide Conservation Education: MCC strives to raise awareness and interest in the natural environment. Individual members serve with a school or other organization for a year; individualized curricula are developed, teachers trained, outdoor learning centers constructed and conservation education activities conducted.

Engage Conservation Volunteers: The MCC assists public and non-profit groups by identifying volunteer opportunities, recruiting, matching, providing insurance for, and supporting volunteers and interns and their supervisors. Volunteers are also recruited to work with MCC teams.

AmeriCorps Member Benefit Information

Members may be eligible for deferment of student loans, with interest paid upon completion of service and may also qualify for child care reimbursement.

Members who fulfill terms of service will receive education awards as listed below:

1700 Hours	\$5,350
900 Hours	\$2,675
450 Hours	\$1,415
300 Hours	\$1,132

Members who do not successfully complete their terms of service including hours and length of time as stated in their agreements, will forfeit their Education Award.

Maine Conservation Corps Member Benefit Information

Members receive a weekly living allowance (less applicable taxes), a Maine State Park Pass, health insurance during their terms of service, and are covered under MCC' General Liability and Workers Compensation Insurance policies.

Please note that members and volunteers are NOT entitled to receive unemployment compensation at the completion of their service.

Holiday, Sick and Personal Leave Time

MCC does not provide traditional Holiday, Sick and Personal Leave time. Organizations depend on the service members and host site programs provide. We ask that members be mindful of the commitment they have made to serve their communities and complete their projects.

AmeriCorps Policies on Prohibited Activities

The MCC is an AmeriCorps program supporting the ethic of the National Service movement and the guidelines of the AmeriCorps program.

Prohibited activities *during service time* include:

- (1) Attempting to influence legislation;
- (2) Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- (3) Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- (4) Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- (5) Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- (6) Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- (7) Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily

or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;

- (8) Providing a direct benefit to—
 - (i) A business organized for profit;
 - (ii) A labor union;
 - (iii) A partisan political organization;
 - (iv) A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative; and
 - (v) An organization engaged in the religious activities described in paragraph (g) of this section, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities;
- (9) Conducting a voter registration drive or using Corporation funds to conduct a voter registration drive;
- (10) Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services; and
- (11) Trafficking in persons – This grant is subject to requirements of Section 106(g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (22 U.S.C 7104).
- (12) Fundraising (not more than 10% of member's time) AmeriCorps members may not:
 - (i) Raise funds for living allowances or for an organization's general (as opposed to project) operating expenses or endowment.
 - (ii) Write a grant application to the corporation or to any other Federal agency.
- (13) Such other activities as the Corporation may prohibit.

Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed above on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-Corporation funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps or MCC logo while doing so.

Maine Conservation Corps Policies and Procedures

MCC members represent the MCC and the Department of Conservation throughout the State of Maine. Your actions will affect everyone in the program and the program's reputation in the community. By serving in the MCC program, you are accepting this commitment to service. These policies and procedures maintain the integrity of the program and provide a foundation for a successful term of service.

It is important that you know and respect these policies and adhere to them. Please ask questions about these policies if you feel that you do not completely understand their justifications. Infractions will lead to disciplinary action and may mean dismissal from the program.

Drug/Alcohol Policy

In accordance with the Drug Free Workplace Act, 41 U.S.C.~701 et seq. Implementing regulations, 45 C.F.R. Part 2542, and the MCC rules and regulations.

- The legal drinking age in the State of Maine is 21 years of age. Possession or use of alcohol by individuals who are under the legal drinking age is prohibited at all times.

Individuals who are 21 years or older are prohibited from purchasing alcohol for individuals who are under the legal drinking age.

- The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the MCC program.
- Charge or conviction of any criminal drug statute must be reported in writing by the member to the Program Coordinator within five days of the charge or conviction.
- The member's continued participation in the program is conditioned upon compliance with the notice requirements.
- An appropriate action for the member including suspension and/or referral to a drug rehabilitation program or release for cause consistent with the Corporation for National Service's rules on termination and suspension of service will be taken by the Program Director.
- In implementing the Drug Free Workplace Act, the MCC Program will adhere to Federal laws and its grant assurances related to alcohol and substance abuse non-discrimination and confidentiality.
- The MCC supports members seeking a drug awareness program, information about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, drug counseling, rehabilitation, and member assistance or member support services.
- Possession or use of alcohol is not allowed by any member of the MCC during a session of service. A session of service begins and ends according to a schedule assigned to the member by the Program Coordinator or Host Site Supervisor, and includes all scheduled and unscheduled time during the session. **This policy also applies during residency.**

Alcohol and drug use and abuse adversely affects health, may create dangerous situations, and serves to undermine the community's confidence in the MCC programs. Therefore, the MCC prohibits the use of drugs or alcohol during service hours.

Tobacco has also been shown to adversely affect a user's health and, in some cases, the health of those who are exposed to secondhand smoke. Therefore, members who do smoke will be considerate of others and minimize exposure to other individuals.

Maine Conservation Corps Definitions

- Substance: alcohol or drugs
- Alcohol: ethyl alcohol, grain alcohol or ethanol; liquid with intoxicating characteristics
- Drugs: any substance taken in the body, other than alcohol, which may impair mental faculties and/or physical performance.
- Abuse: use of any drug, alcohol, over-the-counter medication or prescription medication where use is not in accordance with prescription requirements or occurs in circumstances where use is not permitted.
- Tobacco: any tobacco product including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco and other smokeless tobacco products.

Maine Conservation Corps Sexual Harassment Policy

It is the policy of the MCC, that sexual harassment in any form is unacceptable conduct. It will not be tolerated by anyone involved in working or volunteering with the MCC.

Any participant or employee engaged in sexual harassment is subject to disciplinary action including demotion, suspension, and/or dismissal. Staff, supervisors and members are subject to disciplinary action on reports of sexual harassment, or if they retaliate against employees who report or file complaints of sexual harassment.

General Policy Statement

The MCC recognizes the dignity of its members and the right of members to serve in an environment which is free of intimidation and harassment. Such intimidation or harassment based on race or color, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, age, ancestry or national origin, whistleblower activity, previous assertion of a claim or marital status is a violation of State policy. Because such harassment seriously undermines the integrity of the workplace and adversely affects member morale, it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In addition, it is considered grounds for disciplinary action up to and including release from service.

Examples of harassment related to race or color, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, age, ancestry or national origin, whistleblower activity or previous assertion of a claim include the following, which may be a series of incidents or a single occurrence:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, gestures, comments, or contact;
- Threats;
- Offensive jokes;
- Subjecting employees to ridicule, slurs, or derogatory actions;
- Inequitable disciplinary actions and service assignments.

Further examples of sexual harassment include: behavior that is **verbal** and sexual in nature – such as comments about a person's looks, personal inquiries, sexual jokes, use of derogatory sexual stereotypes, uttering sexually suggestive sounds, writing sexual notes, **non-verbal sexual behavior**- such as looking someone up and down, staring or leering at someone's body, deliberate blocking of a person's path, displaying sexual visuals, making sexual gestures; or **physical** – such as pinching, grabbing, sexual assault or any physical contact of a sexual nature.

Retaliation

Any form of retaliatory action or threat or suggestion of retaliation by either members or supervisors against any person filing a complaint under this policy or assisting in an investigation is a violation of State policy. Any discriminatory action against any individual because the individual has opposed a practice that would be a violation of the Maine Human Rights Act, Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or the Age Discrimination in Employment Act or because the individual has made a charge, testified or assisted in any investigation, proceeding or hearing under the Maine Human Rights Act, Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Age Discrimination in Employment Act is illegal. A complainant is protected from retaliation regardless of the merits of the original complaint. Retaliation should be reported in the same manner as described above for complaints of harassment and will be promptly investigated. Such retaliatory conduct will be grounds for disciplinary action.

Deb Phillips, the NRSC Human Resource Director, is available for anyone with questions. She can be reached at (207) 287-4925.

Sexual Harassment claims can be reported directly, within 300 days of the alleged incident, to: Maine Human Rights Commission, 51 State House Station, 19 Union Street, Augusta, ME 04333. (Phone): 207-624-6290 (TTY): 1-888-577-6690

Background Check Policy

General Policy Statement

AmeriCorps Programs must perform criminal background checks on all members enrolled on or after Oct. 1, 2009, regardless of whether the member has recurring access to vulnerable populations.

A criminal background check must be conducted in the member's residence state at the time of application to MCC AND the state in which MCC operates.

An FBI fingerprint-based background check meets these two requirements.

General Background Review

- The application will include a statement that information provided may be verified.
- Members will sign that the application is true, correct and complete to the best of the applicant's knowledge.
- The member may have to submit information not specifically requested on the application form.
- MCC may verify any information provided in the application process.
- MCC will conduct reference checks.
- MCC may release information to authorized partners, and/or employees of the State of Maine which may include, but are not limited to, information concerning past work, present work, attendance, evaluations, educational records (including transcripts), military service, criminal records, and any other personal record deemed necessary to verify the information provided in the application or during the selection process.
- MCC will safeguard against the release of all confidential information to unauthorized partners
- Supplying erroneous information or omitting pertinent information as part of the application process may be sufficient cause for release.
- MCC members with regular access to children, persons age 60 and older or individuals with disabilities will not have unsupervised contact while criminal registry checks are pending.

Verification of AmeriCorps Application Information

- Verification of information pertaining to applicants is a responsibility that is shared by MCC and appointing authorities. The MCC is responsible to ensure that applications are complete.

References

- References must be obtained before an offer is made.

Conducting the Background Checks

- Criminal background checks shall be conducted on all members.
 - A criminal record may legitimately be considered pursuant to AmeriCorps requirements.
- A National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR) check shall be conducted on all members.
 - A NSOPR record may legitimately be considered pursuant to AmeriCorps requirements.

Opportunity to Respond to Background Check

- If a person is denied or released from a position with the MCC because of information obtained through a criminal background check, the person shall receive written notice of the reasons for denial and shall have an opportunity to respond to the reasons.

Vehicle Use Background Check Policy

- When the member will be required to drive a State-owned or privately-owned vehicle conducting State business, a driving record check will be conducted.
 - When the operation of a motor vehicle is a regular component of service, a candidate's driving record may legitimately be considered as a factor in the selection process.
 - Members using a vehicle owned by the State of Maine are required to adhere to the VEHICLE USE AGREEMENT provided by Risk Management.

Verification of Identity

- Verification of identity and eligibility for service will be verified [Form I-9] when completing new member paperwork.

Diversity/Equal Opportunity Policy

The MCC is committed to equal recruitment for all persons regardless of race, creed, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry, age, handicap, marital status, political affiliation, arrest or conviction record, or membership in the military service. The Program Coordinator is obligated to select members who bring diversity.

The MCC shall, in all solicitations or advertising for members and volunteers for community service placed by or on behalf of the MCC relating to this program shall state that all qualified applicants shall receive consideration for recruitment without regard to race, color, religious creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, age and physical or mental disability.

The MCC shall inform the contracting Department's Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinator of any discrimination complaints brought to an external regulatory body (Maine Human Rights Commission, EEOC, Office of Civil Rights) against their agency by any individual as well as any lawsuit regarding alleged discriminatory practice.

The MCC shall comply with all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in employment and in the provision of service to include accessibility and reasonable accommodations for employees and clients.

Discrimination Policy

Members of the MCC AmeriCorps Program are required to maintain and uphold a safe, friendly and discrimination-free environment for everyone involved. Members can expect to serve with a diverse group from different backgrounds and values. Discrimination of any type will not be tolerated and may be grounds for release.

If members observe any discriminatory behavior, report this to the Program Coordinator, the Host Site Supervisor or the MCC Director. If the incidence involves any of these people, follow the MCC Grievance Procedure.

Discrimination claims can be reported directly, within 300 days of the alleged incident, to: Maine Human Rights Commission, 51 State House Station, 19 Union Street, Augusta, ME 04333. (Phone): 207-624-6290 (TTY): 1-888-577-6690

Code of Conduct Policy

While in service the member is expected to:

- demonstrate mutual respect towards others
- follow directions
- direct concern, problems and suggestions to the appropriate Program Official
- maintain a positive attitude towards service to the public
- not engage in any activity involving proselytizing or assisting religious organizations, attempting to influence legislation or an election, or aide a partisan political organization, helping or hindering union activity, or aiding a business organized for profit
- participate in all educational and service components of the program
- complete assignments in a safe, timely and satisfactory manner
- wear appropriate clothing or uniform when participating in service projects
- Field Team members will participate with other members at the service project sites with residential group living tasks

At no time may the member:

- engage in any activity that is illegal under local, state or federal law
- engage in activities that pose a significant safety risk to others, including aggressive behavior or fighting

The member understands that the following acts will also constitute a violation of the Code of Conduct Policy:

- unauthorized tardiness
- unauthorized absence
- failure to submit two consecutive timesheets

- repeated use of inappropriate language (i.e. profanity) in the Program, including service sites and Program housing sites
- stealing or lying
- engaging in activity that may physically or emotionally damage other members or members of the community
- possessing firearms or other weapons on or around the service site or any residential facility
- possessing or using illegal drugs during the term of service
- possession or use of alcohol during the performance of service activities or while in residential status
- failure to notify the Program of any criminal arrest or conviction that occurs during the term of service or one prior to the term of service

Standard of Service Statement

MCC has a high standard of service and a positive reputation. Our partners have high expectations of what our members can accomplish. The character, experience, and skills of the members of this program have succeeded in making a significant impact in this state. As a member of this program you will be following in these footsteps. Your own personal standard of service must be set high. It is a lot of hard work, but the rewards are tremendous

MCC Disciplinary Procedure

For violating the stated rules, MCC will do the following:

- **first offense**, an appropriate MCC official will issue a verbal warning
- **second offense**, an appropriate MCC official will issue a written warning and reprimand to the member
- **third offense**, the member may be suspended without compensation
- **fourth offense**, MCC may release the member for cause

MCC reserves the right to release the member for cause if, in the opinion of the Program Director, his/her conduct undermines the effectiveness of the Program or the project to which he/she is assigned.

MCC may release the member for cause if, in the opinion of the Program Director, he/she repeatedly or periodically demonstrates inappropriate behavior by engaging in a pattern of misconduct.

However, the above disciplinary procedure will NOT be followed if the infraction is serious enough to warrant a different process. The member understands that he/she will be either suspended or released for cause for committing certain acts during the term of service such as being convicted or charged with a violent felony, possession, sale or distribution of a controlled substance during a term of service and possession or use of alcohol during a session of service.

Release from Term of Service

- (a) The member understands that he/she may be released for the following two reasons:
- (1) for **cause**, as explained in paragraph (b) of this section; or
 - (2) for **compelling personal circumstances** as defined in paragraph (c) of this section.

- (b) the Program will release for cause for the following reasons:
 - (1) the member has dropped out of the Program without obtaining a release for compelling personal circumstances from the appropriate Program official;
 - (2) during the term of service, the member has been convicted of a violent felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance;
 - (3) the member has committed a fourth offense in accordance with the MCC disciplinary procedures; or
 - (4) any other serious breach that in the judgment of the Director would undermine the effectiveness of the Program.
- (c) The Program may release or suspend the member from the term of service, due to compelling personal circumstances if:
 - (1) the member has a serious injury or illness that makes completing the term impossible.
 - (2) there is a serious injury or illness or death of an immediate family member and the member is needed to care for that family member or take over the duties of the family member;
 - (3) the member is drafted by the Armed Services of the United States; or
 - (4) some other serious circumstance occurs that makes it impossible or very difficult for the member to complete the term of service and the Program deems that circumstance to be compelling.
- (d) The Program will suspend the member's term of service for the following reasons:
 - (1) the member has been charged with a violent felony or the sale or distribution of a controlled substance. (If the member is found not guilty or the charge is dismissed, the member may resume his/her term of service. The member will not receive back living allowances or credit for any service hours missed.)
 - (2) the member has been charged with a first offense of possession of a controlled substance. (If the member demonstrates enrollment in an approved drug rehabilitation program, the member may, at the discretion of the Program be allowed to resume the term of service. The member will not receive back living allowances or credit for any service hours missed.)
- (e) The Program may suspend the member's term of service for violating the Code of Conduct set forth in this handbook.
- (f) If the member discontinues his/her term of service for any reason other than a release for compelling personal circumstances, the member will cease to receive benefits and will not receive the education award.
- (g) If the member discontinues his/her term of service due to compelling personal circumstances as described in paragraph (c) above, the member will cease to receive benefits. If, however, the member has completed at least 15% of the required service hours, the member may be eligible to receive a pro-rated portion of the education award.
- (h) If the member's term of service with the Program ends prematurely due to a lack of funding for the Program, and it is not possible or practical for the member to transfer to another AmeriCorps program, pro-ration of applicable benefits will be based on AmeriCorps and Program rules in effect at that time.

Grievance Procedures

A member who has a concern about the MCC Program, specifically if he/she has a grievance concerning assignments, evaluations, non-selection of members, displacement of employees, duplication of activities by MCC, or disciplinary action taken against them by the MCC may:

- Take their concern/grievance to their Program Coordinator.
- If the member is not satisfied with the response of the Program Coordinator, the member may appeal to the Director of the MCC in writing, describing in detail the issue they are grieving.
- If the member is appealing a disciplinary action, the first appeal is made to the highest-ranking staff person who was officially part of the disciplinary action.
- If all appeals to the Program Staff are unsatisfactory, the member may request resolution through alternative dispute resolution (ADR), such as mediation. The program Director may agree to ADR or may refer the member to the formal grievance proceeding.
- If ADR is not used or is not successful, the member may appeal, in writing, to the Director of the Bureau of Employment Services (BES), Maine Department of Labor, 55 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333, and request a hearing. The BES Director will refer the matter to an administrative hearing officer to hear the opposing sides of the issue and render a decision on the grievance.
- If the decision is adverse to the grievant or no decision is reached, the grievant may request binding arbitration.
- All actions under this process must be taken in a timely fashion. The maximum allowable times are those given in the AmeriCorps Grievance requirements at 42 U.S.C. §12636 and 45 C.F.R. § 2540.230 as follows:

Timeline for Grievance Procedures

- Within 1 year of alleged occurrence → GRIEVANCE FILED
- Within 30 days of filing of grievance → HEARING
- Within 60 days of filing of grievance → DECISION
- If decision is adverse to grievant, or 60 days after filing grievance if no decision has been reached → REQUEST FOR BINDING ARBITRATION
- Within 45 days after request for arbitration, or within 30 days after arbitrator appointed
- BINDING ARBITRATION HEARING
- Within 30 days of arbitration hearing → BINDING ARBITRATION DECISION.

Unless otherwise agreed to by the parties, any program action that is being grieved will remain in effect unless the action is finally overruled or modified in the ADR, grievance hearing, or binding arbitration process.

Maine Conservation Corps Member Rights and Responsibilities

- Members receive a weekly living allowance.
- Members who fail to submit two consecutive timesheets will face suspension resulting in a loss of the member's living allowance.
- Members are expected to comply by the work schedule established by the host organization and MCC. Unexcused absences or lateness will result in disciplinary action, which may lead to suspension or release.
- Members are required to successfully complete the entire term of service in order to earn the education award. These hours are only a minimum number of hours, and should in no way be considered anything but a minimum.
- If for any reason a member must end his/her term of service before the agreed-upon end date, he/she must inform the Program Coordinator as soon as possible.
- Members are expected to participate in all program activities, including meetings, and all-corps service days. Members are expected to be physically present and mentally ready to begin at designated times.
- Members are expected to be respectful and considerate of each other at all times.
- Members must respect religious customs.
- Members are encouraged to register and vote. Members who are unable to vote before or after service hours may request to vote during service hours.
- Members are allowed to serve on a jury. While serving as jurors, members will continue to receive all benefits and earn credit for their normal service hours.
- Members serving in the Armed Forces Reserves should seek to fulfill their two-week active duty requirement when it will not disrupt their MCC service. If the dates of active duty are inflexible, members will be granted leave for the two-week period. Members will continue to receive all benefits and earn credit for their normal service hours. Members may not receive time off for additional Reserves-related service beyond the two-week active duty service. No service credit is received for the once-a-month weekend service in the Reserves.
- Members, when not engaged in officially sanctioned program activities, are not under the supervision of MCC or the host site nor are the MCC or the host site responsible or liable for a member's personal actions or safety.
- Members are not allowed to engage in relationships with students or volunteers to whom they provide service. It is unprofessional for people in a supervisory role to engage in a relationship with someone they have been in a mentor/role model relationship with.

- MCC prohibits intimate or family relationships within the chain of command in order to prevent compromising the ability to lead.
- Members must wear appropriate clothing or uniform when participating in scheduled or unscheduled service hours. Clothing should be neat and language appropriate.
- Members must ensure that all volunteers serving at the service site, (including friends and family) sign a Volunteer Assignment Agreement before beginning. MCC recommends sending Volunteer Assignment Agreements to the MCC Program Coordinator weekly.

General Safety and Emergency Action

Should a member become injured during service hours, the member will need to notify the MCC office immediately so that the necessary information can be submitted in a timely fashion to Maine Employers Mutual Insurance Company (MEMIC). MCC will need to report the injury within 48 hours. The member must keep all paperwork from the hospital or doctor's office – MCC may need to forward this information to MEMIC. If the member visits a facility, the member should specify they are a member of the MCC and not the host site organization.

If a member is injured during service hours and needs to obtain medical treatment, all hours involved in travel to and from the medical facility, as well as time spent at the medical facility, will be counted as service hours.

If there is a change in a member's health status during his/her term of service, he/she is required to notify the Program and provide appropriate documentation upon request.

When a member is unable to resume service duties due to illness, personal leave, a service related injury or other circumstances the member may be suspended from the program until they are able to return to service. This suspension will not be related to disciplinary action.

Emergency Contact List

In the event of an emergency, use the following to notify and find help:

MCC Office 1-800-245-5627 or 207-624-6085

Sara Knowles (W) 207-624-6090 (C) 309-255-7286

Bryan Kalleberg (C) 207-215-3696

Steven Gaffney (W) 207-624-6088 (H) 207-873-4864 (C) 207-557-4060

Jo Orlando (W) 207-624-6091 (C) 207-557-4063

Linda Shapleigh (W) 207-624-6086 (H) 207-238-6136

Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222

Division of Risk Management 1-800-525-1252

MEMIC 1-800-636-4292

Maine State Police 1-800-452-4664

Field Team Policies and Guidelines

Holiday, Sick and Personal Leave Time

- All members must request time off for personal or planned medical reasons 2 weeks in advance from the Program Coordinator. Requests for time off cannot be guaranteed.
- MCC members who anticipate missing service time, and who request personal leave in advance, must make arrangements to make up missed time during the remainder of their term of service. The following conditions must be met:
 - Extra hours may be earned serving on MCC projects or
 - Extra hours may be earned serving with an approved outside partner or organization.

Timesheet Guidelines

- All members must submit a timesheet at the end of each service session. Each member will enter the hours served on one side of the form and complete the diary section on the reverse side of the form.
- Timesheets must be neat, legible, and written in blue or black ink. A timesheet may be declined if it is poorly filled out or not legible. Any changes must be made by drawing a single line through a wrong number, with the correct number entered beside it, and must be accompanied with a date and initials.
 - If the team is serving one week sessions, members will fill out their timesheets on Friday and leave them in the Field Team mail slot.
 - If a team is serving a 9-day session, members will submit two timesheets when they return to the MCC office.
 - Teams in “residential” status will mail their timesheets at the end of the service session – so they will reach the MCC office within two business days.

Time Management

- Countable hours: Members count hours according to AmeriCorps rules in order to qualify for education awards. These rules are also consistent with State of Maine rules for employees. The following activities are allowable as time for members:
 - Time directly used for service and training
 - Loading and unloading vehicles and trailers
 - Travel time from Hallowell to the service site and return – If a member travels directly from home to the site (with permission of the Coordinator) the member will count his/her actual travel time, which may be less (not more) than the team.
 - Educational events or “teachable moments”
 - Two 15-minute breaks each day
 - Planning and procuring food, fuel and supplies (only members who participate).
 - Setting up and taking down camp (Should not exceed 1 hour)
 - Hiking or driving from camp to the project site
 - Cleaning, sharpening or servicing tools and equipment.
 - PT, community concerns and daily wrap up sessions

- Non-Countable hours:
 - You must take 30 minutes for lunch, and it does not count toward service time.
 - Travel time from your home to Hallowell or residential service site and back
 - Preparing meals and eating
 - Preparing personal gear and lunch at the beginning of each day
 - Washing dishes and cleaning up the campsite

Education Events

- Teams may participate in up to 2 hours of education each week. It is expected that each team document at least 2 education events each week.
- Teams may travel short distances for education events. It is preferred that education events occur at the project site to maximize learning about the host area and minimizing travel expense. **Teams should travel no more than 20 minutes or 10 miles to an education event. Travel time includes hiking.** Please ask questions if you are unsure whether or not your education event meets the above criteria.
- Teams should not conduct education events during sessions which include a MCC Education Day. The MCC Education Day will be counted toward education hours for the session and documented accordingly.

Team Building Events

- Teams may also travel short distances for “Team Building” events. This would include going out for ice cream or to a movie. “Team Building” events must include the entire team or at least be available to everyone. This travel should also be limited to 20 minutes or 10-mile trips and should not exceed two trips per week.

Individual travel for leisure time activities is **personal use of a state vehicle** and is **prohibited**.

Project Management

Projects are developed, managed and completed through the following series of events:

- MCC invites agencies to request MCC teams. Agencies also contact MCC throughout the year to explore possibilities.
- The Program Coordinator schedules projects.
- Site visits are scheduled by the Program Coordinator and Senior Team Leaders.
- Site Visits are completed to document: project details, project expectations, quality standards, campsite location, water access, logistics, specifications/quantities of materials and emergency responses plans.
- A Team **Session Report** is used to record the productivity and events that occurred during the session. The reports collect this information:
 - ✓ Staff, Team Leaders and Project Liaison
 - ✓ Safety Awareness
 - ✓ Service Activities

- ✓ Session Highlights or Great Stories
 - ✓ Sponsor/MCC Partner Status
 - ✓ Vehicle Concerns
 - ✓ Educational Events
 - ✓ Volunteer Participation
 - ✓ Service Project Hours
- Session Reports are used to complete reports for the Maine Commission for Community Service and AmeriCorps.
- Session reports are very important!**

General Safety and Emergency Action

Team Leaders must bring Worker's Compensation forms to all service sites. If you or a member becomes injured "on the job" you will need to notify the MCC office immediately. **We need to report your injury to MEMIC within 48 hours.** Keep all of your paperwork from the hospital or doctor's office – we may need to forward this information to MEMIC. If you visit a facility, make sure to tell them that you serve for the MCC and not the host site organization.

Project and Safety Standards

- It is the responsibility of MCC to protect all employees and members from hazards present at all service sites by complying with accepted safety standards. These standards include those established by the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, as well as standards established by Agency Partners, The Maine Safety Works, The Department of Conservation, The Division of Risk Management and the MCC.
- In order to meet the responsibility of protecting members from workplace hazards, MCC will supply personal protective equipment according to OSHA/Maine SafetyWorks standards. Such equipment will include, but will not be limited to the following:
 - ✓ Hardhat –to be worn at all times.
 - ✓ Eye protection – to be worn at all times
 - ✓ Dust masks and respirators – to be worn while using any rock drill.
 - ✓ Hearing protection – for protection from engine noise.
 - ✓ Face protection - for chainsaw, rock drill and power pruner operators.
 - ✓ Cut resistant leg chaps for chainsaw and brush saw operators.
 - ✓ Cut resistant boots for chainsaw and brush saw operators.
 - ✓ Rubber gloves for working with preservatives or chemicals.
- The MCC standard for eye protection is Crews Inc. Safety Eyewear. Any member who normally wears glasses will be required to wear safety glasses or screen goggles over their personal glasses if they are 10% smaller in area than the Crews.
- MCC requires members to provide their own work gloves and to wear gloves when engaged in activities.
- MCC requires members to wear pants while engaged in all service activities.
- MCC members must wear long sleeve shirts while operating chainsaws and while scoring or breaking rock. All long sleeve or long tailed shirts should always be tucked in during

service, especially when operating rotating machinery such as chainsaws, rock drills, brush saws or chippers.

- MCC requires members to wear steel toe work boots when operating chainsaws, brush saws, or other machinery where there is a risk of a cutting or crushing injury to the feet. For all other activities, members are required to wear sturdy, all leather boots, with or without steel toes that adequately support ankles and protect the feet from the impact of tools, rocks, logs or other building materials.
- MCC requires that each team have at least one member trained to the level of Wilderness First Aid.
- Protective equipment is a work habit. It only serves to protect you from the unexpected if it is use all the time when you are exposed to risk.
- Members will be removed from service if they do not cooperate with wearing personal protective equipment.
- Friends, family members and volunteers must comply with the same MCC safety requirements as members while they are serving with a field team.

Accident and Emergency Management

Note: All Team Leaders will develop an Emergency Response Plan for each project site immediately following their site visit and prior to beginning service. The plan will include the communications options available at that location and directions to the nearest emergency medical facility.

If a member of a team becomes ill or is injured at a project site, the following 5-step procedure should be used:

1. Stabilize the patient, and provide first aid to the best of your ability and at a level appropriate to your training.
2. Determine if the patient needs evacuation now. Examples:
 - ✓ Anaphylaxis or serious allergic reaction
 - ✓ Severe Bleeding
 - ✓ Threats to the airway or difficulty breathing
 - ✓ Heart problems
 - ✓ Head injuries, especially with any loss of consciousness
 - ✓ Injuries to hands or face
 - ✓ 2nd or 3rd degree burns larger than a quarter
3. If a team is back-county, and it is determined that the patient needs to go to medical care, walk patient out to the vehicle or initiate a carry with the team. (If a carry, allow 2 hrs. per mile).
4. Drive at a safe rate of speed to the nearest hospital as indicated by the Emergency Response Plan. Take roads that you know, do not explore unknown "shortcuts".
5. Reporting an Accident/Illness. Team Leaders must report any accident requiring medical care to MCC office staff: Worker Compensation claims must be reported within 48 hours of the incident. If you do not make contact with MCC office staff, you will need to report to MEMIC 1-800-636-4292.

Base Camp Rules and Guidelines

- Team Leaders must designate areas for smoking in order to keep second hand smoke away from non-smokers. Smokers must properly dispose of their ashes and butts.
- Alcohol and recreational drugs are not allowed.
- MCC will provide tents for members to use at base camp. Senior Team Leaders, Team Leaders, and Assistant Team Leaders will be issued a 2-person tent. Team members of the same sex will share a 4-person tent. Variations may be necessary due to availability of tents and the nature of remote projects.
- Team Leaders may request additional tents from the **Program Coordinator** if they must address special needs of their members.
- MCC will not provide tents to members in non-residential status during time off.
- Water borne pathogens can threaten the health of everyone on a team. If one member becomes ill, it is likely that the entire team will become ill. If potable water is not available and a team must rely on surface water or a water source such as surface water (ponds, streams, springs, shallow wells) – all MCC team members must treat all drinking water by one of the following methods:
 - ✓ Treatment with Chlorine (2 drops bleach solution in 1 quart water for 15 minutes).
 - ✓ Treatment with Iodine (via Polar Pure system).
 - ✓ Boiling
- Improperly washed dishes and cooking gear can also spread illness among team members. All dishes will be washed by using the three bucket system:
 - ✓ Hot soapy water
 - ✓ Hot rinse water
 - ✓ Cold bleach rinse
- If the campsite does not have a toilet, waste will be disposed of according to Leave No Trace guidelines.
- Washing your hands with soap before eating reduces the spread of infection. All members are required to wash their hands with warm water, soap and sanitizer upon arrival at camp and before handling any food.
- Teams in bear country will protect food either by hanging or storing in a secure building.
- Proper disposal of spoiled food is necessary to avoid illness.
- All members will take turns sharing all camp chores.
- No open toe shoes are allowed in cooking areas or near boiling water.

- Going barefoot is prohibited at all times.
- Wrestling, horseplay, etc. is discouraged.
- All campfires will be made in accordance with Maine Fire Law, and if required, with a permit from the Maine Forest Service.
- Pets are NOT allowed at base camps or project sites.

Food Management

- Team Leaders are responsible for making sure the team has the food it needs for a project session. All of the team will participate in planning, shopping, transporting, storing and preparing food. It is a priority to have enough food for the session and also meet individual food preferences.
- Up to one hour will be permitted for planning and shopping for food with the team.

Swimming Policies

- MCC campsites often have access to water and swimming opportunities. Swimming places are rarely supervised with lifeguards. Swimming is allowed but only at your own risk.
- The team must explore and assess the water area and weather conditions before deciding to swim. Extra care must be exercised when assessing potentially hazardous water features.
- Members must never swim alone and should be realistic about their abilities.
- Members must dress in appropriate attire for swimming, i.e. shorts and t-shirts or swimsuits.

Vehicles & Transportation

- Central Fleet Management (CFM) vehicles are parked at the MCC office when not out on projects. These vehicles are not to be used for personal business or commuting purposes.
- CFM vehicles assigned to residential sites will be parked at the base camp during days off.
- Team Leaders will be assigned a vehicle and trailer for their team and are responsible for taking care of these vehicles.
 - ✓ Vehicles shall be visually inspected for damage before leaving to go to the project.
 - ✓ All tires shall be visually checked, pressure checked and filled with air if they appear to be slack – correct pressure is located on driver door sticker.
 - ✓ Engine oil level will be checked and topped off if necessary at the beginning of each session.

- ✓ Each vehicle has a service sticker on the windshield. Please remind the Program Coordinator to schedule service when there is 700 miles left.
 - ✓ Trailers shall be inspected for damage, tires visually checked and filled with air if needed.
- Vehicles shall be safely loaded, with no unsecured cargo placed higher than the seat backs. No flammable liquids, fuels or gases will be carried in the passenger compartments of any vehicle.
 - Seatbelts are mandatory, both by Executive Order and State Law. All occupants shall wear seatbelts, even if they are lying down on the seats.
 - If the vehicle is involved in an accident, and sustains damage:
 - ✓ A telephone report must be made to Risk Management Division 1-800-525-1252 and the Program Coordinator.
 - ✓ An Accident/Incident Report shall be submitted to the Risk Management Division within 24 hours.
 - Monthly mileage reports are submitted to the Office at the end of each month.
 - Trash and personal items are removed from the vehicles at the end of each project session.
 - Vehicles must be locked when unattended or parked for days off.
 - The MCC office and the Division of Risk Management must approve all drivers.
 - Personal use of State vehicles is unlawful. (PL 1985 c.378).
 - Smoking or the use of tobacco products is not allowed in state vehicles. (DOL 8/19/02)
 - Pets are not allowed in any state vehicles. (3/20/98 – D. Risk Management)
 - Parking tickets and moving violations are the responsibility of each driver and not the responsibility of MCC or the State of Maine.
 - You must have your driver's license with you while driving MCC vehicles.
 - It is unlawful to transport alcoholic beverages in State vehicles.
 - Members must obtain advance approval from the Program Coordinator before bringing a personal vehicle to a training or project site.

Uniforms

MCC will provide members with a uniform shirt and/or two t-shirts. We ask that members wear a MCC uniform shirt or t-shirt during site visits, AmeriCorps education days, and while serving on MCC projects. Members may purchase additional t-shirts and uniform shirts if they wish.

Cell Phones

MCC will assure that each Team Leader will have access to a cell phone for MCC business and emergencies. If a Team Leader has a personal cell phone, he or she agrees to use for MCC business, MCC will pay \$5.00 per week to support that phone. This support can be provided to a team member with a cell phone, if they agree to serve as the phone link for that team. If the team does not have a cell phone, MCC will provide the Team Leader with one. Team Leaders are not expected to monitor the phone at all times, but are expected to check messages at mid-day and early evening each day.

Personal Cell Phone use

Members are welcome to bring cell phones on all service sessions. All personal calls must be limited to breaks or evening hours after scheduled service time.

Radio Procedures

- Radios are issued to Team Leaders upon their request and the concurrence of the **Program Coordinator**. Requests should be made at least 1 week before needed – and be recognized in the Emergency Response Plan for the Project.
- When radios are issued, the **Program Coordinator** will review their proper care and use.
- Radios may be used for the following purposes only:
 - ✓ Listening for NOAA weather forecasts
 - ✓ Communications related to coordinating MCC Teams that are operating in the same general area without telephone access.
 - ✓ Coordinating with DOC Staff.
 - ✓ Emergency communications related to accidents
- Radios may not be used for personal communications or non-service related use.
- Use of Radios will be limited to what is necessary to complete service related communications. Messages will be brief, and will use appropriate 10-codes when possible. Language will be professional and will avoid profanity or other inappropriate language.

Care of Radios:

- ✓ Radios will be stored in waterproof metal boxes when not in use.
- ✓ Radio kits will contain a radio, spare batteries, charger, and waterproof bag
- ✓ Batteries will be recharged during time off, after total discharge
- ✓ Batteries will last 2 to 3 days when monitoring only – extras should be carried
- ✓ Radios will not be worn or carried by personnel while doing trail work.
- ✓ Radios can be kept in packs near the service site if they must be monitored.
- ✓ Radios must be kept clean and dry or they will not work.
- ✓ Plastic bags or dry bags will be used to protect radios when not actually in use or during bad weather.
- ✓ Radios will be kept in packs or hung off the ground to avoid being crushed.
- ✓ Damaged or non-functioning radios will be reported to Program Coordinator immediately.